

## MIAMI BEACH – CHRONOLOGY 1900 TO 1920

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| June 3, 1912      | Miami Beach Improvement Co. formed by John Collins   |
| June 5, 1912      | Ocean Beach Realty Company formed by Lummus Brothers   |
| July 1, 1912      | Thomas Pancoast arrives in Miami to begin work on bridge to Miami Beach                        |
| July 9, 1912      | Lummus Brothers file first plat on Miami Beach   |
| January 13, 1913  | Carl Fisher receives 200 acres of land on Miami Beach from John Collins                        |
| May 23, 1913      | Thomas Pancoast & family are first to drive across new bridge to Miami Beach                   |
| June 12, 1913     | John Collins' two-mile wooden bridge, "Venetian Way" to Miami Beach opens formally.            |
| December 10, 1913 | Fisher's Alton Beach Realty opens land sales on Miami Beach                                    |
| March 26, 1915    | Miami Beach incorporated as City of Ocean Beach, with 33 voters.                               |
| April 6, 1915     | First official City Meeting  |
| April 6, 1917     | US enters WWI  |
| May 1, 1917       | The City of Miami Beach was officially incorporated.   |
| May 27, 1917      | First Sunday school held on Miami Beach, at Smith's Casino                                     |
| March 5, 1919     | Miami Beach Electric Company & Miami Beach Railway Company organized by Carl Fisher and others |

## OTHER HISTORICAL INFORMATION REGARDING WOMEN VOTERS

Elayne Weisburd was the first female Commissioner, beginning on November 1, 1977, and serving until November 6, 1979. On Nov. 6, 1979, Mildred Falk began serving, and served until Nov. 3, 1981. Susan Gottlieb began in 1991, Nancy Liebman began in 1993, and Matti Bower began in 1999.

The 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on **August 18, 1920**, and became effective immediately, saying that "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." [When it says sex, it really means gender; otherwise, many people would not have been able to vote--adl]. Some states allowed women to vote before 1920, but not Florida. Women voted in Miami Beach for the first time on October 25, 1920, for city officers. Eight days later, on Nov. 2, they voted for president.

Women voted for the first time, with Mrs. M.D. Sammons being the first woman to vote. Every woman who had registered voted except for Mrs. Herman Schiebli who was out of the city. The newspaper noted that "Most of the woman made it an afternoon affair, coming down to the polls between 3 and 5 o'clock. All that was lacking to make it a fashionable affair was tea and cakes." Booths had been constructed for women voters, with curtains. Someone had made sure that the city clerk's room, where the voting occurred, was clean and in good order because "The government wanted to make a good impression on the women voters." Women accounted for about fifty of the voters, and were described as very earnest and independent and asking for no instructions from male inspectors or election officials.

After September 4, when the Dade County supervisor of registration received the Go-Ahead, a number of women began registering for the first time. In Miami Beach, Mrs. Oliver P. (Marie) Searing was the first woman to register for the presidential election. She was the only woman on Miami Beach who had voted for a president, having voted for Theodore Roosevelt while a resident of Seattle, Washington. She also had voted in Alaska. Washington state had granted women full suffrage in 1910, and Alaska had followed in 1913. By 1920, when the federal amendment forced all states to grant full suffrage to women, fifteen states had already granted full voting privileges, twelve others allowed women to vote in presidential elections, and two other states allowed women to vote in primary elections. Florida was a politically conservative state which had resisted suffrage for women.